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DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/EAP, DS/DSS/OSAC, DS/TIA/ITA

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SUBJECT: 2008 OVERSEAS SECURITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (OSAC)
CRIME AND SAFETY REPORT

REF: A. 08 STATE 132056

[1](#)B. 07 TAIPEI 00089

[1](#)1. (U) Responses are keyed to ref tel A.

[1](#)I. OVERALL CRIME AND SAFETY SITUATION: The overall crime threat in Taiwan is LOW, with the majority of crime, like many large cities, occurring in downtown Taipei and other metropolitan areas. The American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) is not aware of any specific threats directed against American citizens or U.S. Government personnel. However, all visitors to Taiwan should be aware of the current worldwide travel advisories before undertaking travel to the region.

Crime reports for the year 2008 revealed a significant increase in incidents of intimidation/extortion when compared to 2007. All other crime rates registered decreases, with violent crimes registering a decrease of 14%. While Taiwan has a significant law enforcement presence, travelers should exercise caution and pay particular attention to personal belongings while in crowded areas like night markets and while traveling on public transportation. As a gauge, visitors should take precautions similar to that of any major metropolitan city in the United States, using a common sense approach to travel around Taiwan.

Public Transportation in Taiwan is safe and efficient. Road maintenance in Taiwan is good, however city roads are generally narrow and congested and the traffic situation can be dangerous for both pedestrians and drivers. The many scooters and motorcycles that weave in and out of traffic further hamper driving conditions. Visitors are encouraged to wear seat belts, refrain from riding motorcycles or scooters and to use caution when crossing local streets and alleys. It is also noteworthy to know that taxis in Taiwan seldom have working seat belts in the backseat. When crossing streets, the pedestrian does not automatically have the "right of way" in Taiwan. Mountain roads are typically narrow, winding, and poorly banked, and may become impassable by mudslides after heavy rains or flash floods.

II. POLITICAL VIOLENCE: AIT is not aware of any specific threats directed against American citizens or U.S. Government personnel in Taiwan. However, all visitors should be aware of the current worldwide travel advisories before undertaking travel to the region. Visitors should obtain the latest advisories and travel warnings via the internet at <http://www.travel.state.gov/>. There are no known indigenous terrorist groups operating in Taiwan. War and civil unrest are non-existent in Taiwan. On occasion, sporadic demonstrations do occur, but most often in larger metropolitan areas. These demonstrations are almost always peaceful. There have been very few cases of violence associated with demonstrations but even peaceful protests can turn confrontational.

Visitors are cautioned to avoid large crowds and demonstrations, and use vigilance in their daily travels around Taiwan.

III. POST SPECIFIC CONCERNS: Taiwan is subject to strong

earthquakes that can occur anywhere throughout the island. In recent years, Taiwan has recorded several earthquakes at or above 6.0 on the Richter scale each year. Taiwan is also subject to typhoons, usually in the July to October time frame. Travelers planning a trip to Taiwan can obtain general information about natural disaster preparedness via the internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov/>. Additional information about currently active typhoons can be obtained on the University of Hawaii Tropical Storm webpage at <http://www.solar.ifa.hawaii.edu/Tropical/tropical.html>. The Central Weather Bureau of Taiwan also maintains a website that provides information about typhoons and earthquakes at <http://www.cwb.gov.tw>.

IV. POLICE RESPONSE: The general evaluation of police support and response to foreigners who are victims of crime is considered very good. The police are professionally trained. The National Police Agency maintains a Foreign Affairs Police division that is responsible for all foreigners traveling or residing in Taiwan. There are numerous police sub-stations strategically located throughout the various districts and communities of Taiwan. All have a Foreign Affairs Police officer assigned to aid foreigners and assist with law enforcement matters. Only a limited number of these officers are fluent in English though. The local police/fire emergency telephone number is 110 (similar to dialing 911 in the U.S.). In the Taipei metropolitan area, the Foreign Affairs Police do maintain a 24-hour English capable officer who can be reached at 02-2556-6007. In Kaohsiung call (07)281-5019. For all other cities dial (02)2394-0238.

V. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES: For emergency medical assistance dial 119 from any phone in Taiwan.

Some recommended medical facilities in Taiwan are:

-Taiwan Adventist Hospital (Taipei) - (02)2771-8151.

-Chang Gung Memorial Hospital (Kaohsiung) - (07)731-7123.

For further information on medical facilities in Taiwan please look at the following website:
www.ait.org.tw/en/uscitizens/healthcareintw.asp

VI. TRAVEL PRECAUTIONS: You can greatly reduce your chance of being victimized by following these basic security precautions:

-Keep a low personal profile. Avoid ostentatious displays of money or wealth.

-Be alert to your surroundings.

-Avoid high crime areas and business establishments like brothels, massage parlors, illegal "barbershops" and "nightclubs" which are frequented by prostitutes. Many of these establishments are run by criminals.

-Avoid disputes with local citizens, especially in bars or nightclubs.

-At night, travel on well lighted streets and avoid deserted streets or alleyways.

VII. FURTHER INFORMATION: The American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) is a non-profit organization established by Congress shortly after the United States government changed its diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing on 1 January, 1979. The Taiwan Relations Act authorized the continuation of commercial, cultural and other relations between the United States and Taiwan. AIT is organized along the lines similar to those of a foreign service post and undertakes the

usual wide range of activities representing U.S. interests.

The Regional Security Officer (RSO) is David R. EBERHARDT and he is available to provide additional security information and guidance to U.S. firms and their employees. The Assistant Regional Security Officer is Marcella E. PHELPS and is also available to answer any other security related questions. The Regional Security Office can be reached at (886-2)2162-2333.

Other AIT contact numbers:

-Medical Unit (886-2)2162-2222

-Consular Section (886-2)2162-2239

-Political Section (886-2)2162-2241

-Economic Section (886-2)2162-2240

-Post One (886-2)2162-2319

VIII. OSAC COUNCIL: AIT-Taipei has an OSAC Country Council. Point of Contact is RSO David R. EBERHARDT and can be reached at (886-2)2162-2333 or at EberhardtDR@state.gov.

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